

To: the Independent Planning Commission  
This is a submission regarding the Narrabri Gas Project.

**I object to this project.**

**A submission against AGAINST the Narrabri Gas Project**

It is beyond my comprehension that the Narrabri Gas project has been given approval by the NSW Planning Department when there is so much opposition. In The Environmental Impact Statement attracted 22,721 submissions, of which 98% were objections. The majority (63%) of the 470 submissions from the immediate local area were also objections.

I submitted an OBJECTION in 2017, contributing to the above statistics and I still OBJECT.

- Coal Seam Gas is harmful to health. Neither the NSW Government nor Santos have investigated or dealt with the serious health effects of coal seam gas now appearing in peer-reviewed research in the United States.
- Our native wildlife, some of which are critically endangered, would risk local extinction with the proposed clearing of close to 1,000 hectares of the forest in small patches and connecting lines in the process.
- The clearing of native animal habitat in the Pilliga forest would fragment the largest temperate woodland in New South Wales, home to unique wildlife.
- After the devastating bushfires over Summer, the Pilliga forest is even more fragile and must be protected so that it can recover.
- Santos proposes to extract over 35 billion litres of toxic groundwater, much of it in the first five years. This water will be treated and in the early years will generate tens of thousands of tonnes of salt, for which there is no safe disposal plan.
- The Great Artesian Basin would be under threat as removing the water will cause depressurisation and loss of water in the Pilliga Sandstone, the southern recharge of the Great Artesian Basin, which outcrops in the Pilliga.
- Over 20 years, Santos will remove 37.5 billion litres of water from deep below the Pilliga and treat it in the Leewood water treatment facility. This treatment will produce up to 840,000 tonnes of solid salt, laced with heavy metals, for which Santos still has no disposal plan.
- Our water is precious and must be protected. It will cause significant diversion of water from a recharge aquifer of the Great Artesian Basin, which is a water resource relied upon by rural communities across western NSW. We do not want it contaminated.
- It will cause more trauma to the regional Aboriginal community because the area of impact is crucially important to the spiritual, cultural and social life of Gomeri people.
- The Pilliga is a hugely significant landscape for Gomeri people. Santos' Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment identified 90 known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites in the project

area, including rock shelters, burials and historic camps and hearths. No detailed new surveys for Aboriginal cultural heritage have taken place yet.

- Undertaking detailed surveys after approval as Santos proposes is inappropriate.
- The Gomeri people object to the proposed Pilliga project and this must be respected.
- It will cause economic upheaval in Narrabri and put agricultural industries at risk.
- Santos' own assessment found that there would be "almost certain" impacts on housing affordability for Narrabri residents, which will disproportionately affect low-income households and Indigenous people, who are far more likely to be renters.
- As seen in Queensland, coal seam gas brings upheaval and division to rural communities.
- A CSIRO survey in 2014 found that only 6% of local people living in Queensland gasfield areas thought the industry had improved their lives while 42% said that they were "not coping" or "only just coping".<sup>1</sup>
- It would cause light pollution that will ruin the dark night sky needed by the internationally renowned Siding Spring Observatory.
- There is a glut of exported gas from Queensland and ships of Australian gas are sitting idle, contrary to Santos' claims that the gasfield is needed to "increase supplies" of gas.<sup>2</sup>
- Australia is already struggling to meet its commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement and the proposed Pilliga project would further increase unacceptable levels of gas emissions.
- The world is calling for greener, cleaner energy.
- Our water is precious. Our land is precious. Our native flora and fauna is precious. Indigenous culture is precious. Community health is precious. Clean air is precious.
- All of this accounts for my OBJECTION to the proposed Pilliga project.

<sup>1</sup> Walton, A., McCrea, R. and Leonard, R. (2014). *CSIRO survey of community wellbeing and responding to change: Western Downs region in Queensland. CSIRO Technical report: CSIRO, Australia.* <https://gisera.csiro.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Social-2-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See Toscano, Nick "Australia's LNG tankers sitting idle as global supply glut, COVID start to bite." 17 June 2020. *Sydney Morning Herald.* <https://amp.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/australia-s-lng-tankers-sittingidle-as-global-supply-glut-covid-start-to-bite-20200615-p552oh.html>